

# THE GREENING OF A FOOD DESERT:

## Building Community through Sustainable, Self-Sufficient Food Production



Partnership

A Collaboration of the **Puerto Rican Cultural Center** and  
the **Pedro Albizu Campos High School**

## Students prepare to visit rooftop garden in the community



# What is Food Security?



- “Food security is a term used to describe what our nation should be seeking for all its people – **assured access at all times** to enough food for an active, healthy life, with no need for recourse to emergency food sources or other extraordinary coping behaviors to meet basic food needs.”

- Source: The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). “Hunger and Food Insecurity in the United States.” 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.frac.org>

# Food Systems and Food Security



Food insecurity is a worldwide issue, yet here in the U.S. **36.2 million people are food-insecure** and do not have access to the food they need to prevent hunger and remain healthy.

Source: The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). "Hunger and Food Insecurity in the United States." 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.frac.org>



# Food Systems and Food Security

- According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Black and Latino households experienced rates of food insecurity well above the national norm.
  - ▣ 11.1 percent of U.S. households were considered food insecure in 2007.
  - ▣ 20.1 percent of all Latino households were food insecure.
  - ▣ 22.2 percent of all African American households were food insecure.
- ▣ Source: United States Department of Agriculture. Household Food Security in the United States, 2007.

# What is a Food Desert?

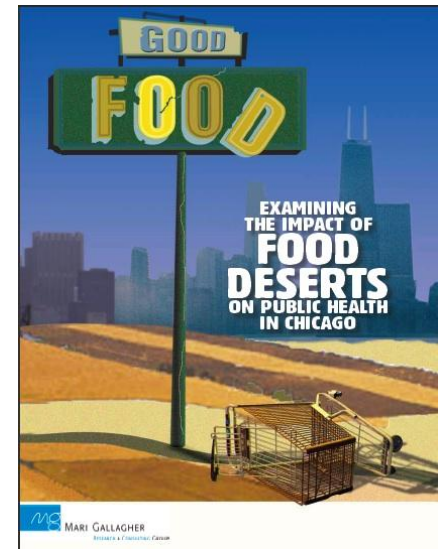
A food desert is a large geographic area where there is little to no access by the local population to healthy foods within a reasonable distance.



Typically, a community's status as a food desert is measured by the number grocery stores it contains. Food deserts often contain a disproportionate number of fast food and processed food outlets.

# Humboldt Park Designated A Food Desert

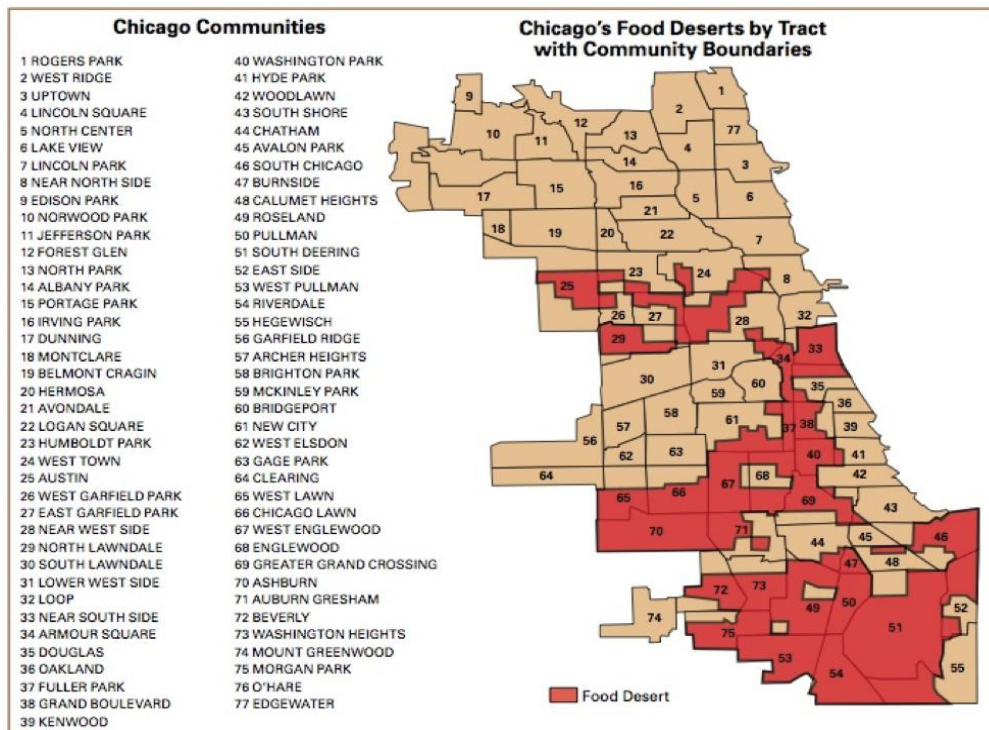
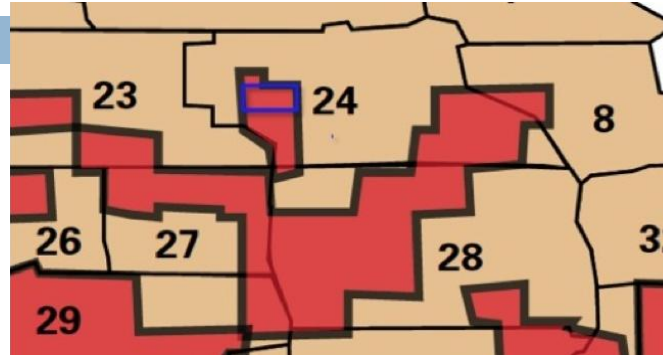
According to a LaSalle Bank study, “Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Chicago” (2006), Greater Humboldt Park falls within the boundaries of Chicago’s three food deserts.



- Gallagher, Mari. (2006). "Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Chicago." Retrieved from: <http://marigallagher.com/projects/>

# Humboldt Park Designated A Food Desert

*Bottom: In a citywide study commissioned by LaSalle Bank, East Humboldt Park (which is part of West Town) was designated as a food desert.*  
*Top: The section outlined in blue is the area to be developed as part of the Greater Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative.*  
 Source: Gallagher, Mari. (2006). *Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Chicago.*

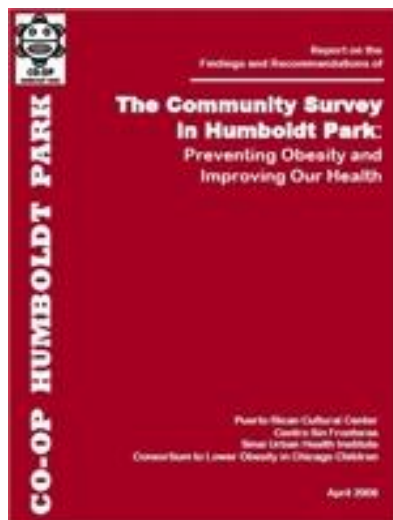




# Humboldt Park Health Disparities

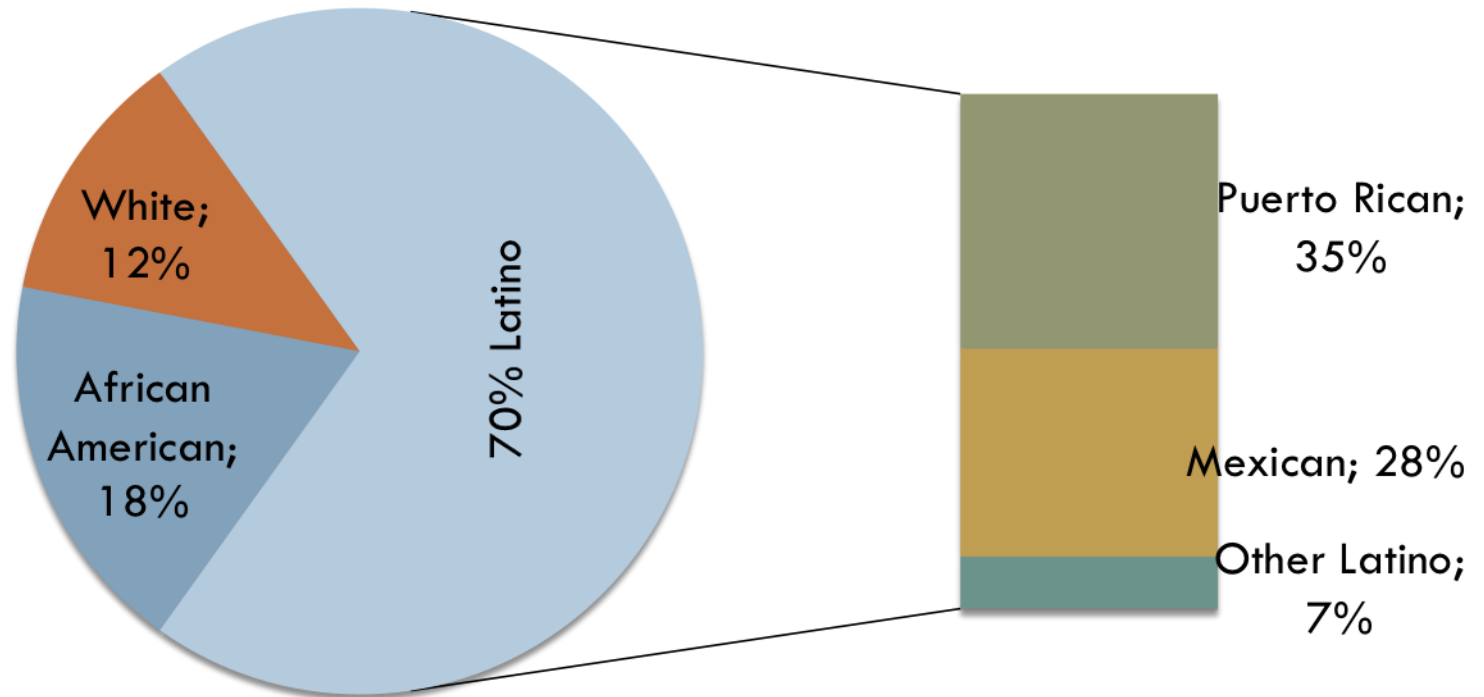


Sinai Urban Health Reports on Health Disparities  
authored by **Steven Whitman, Abigail Silva, Ami Shah, and David Ansell**

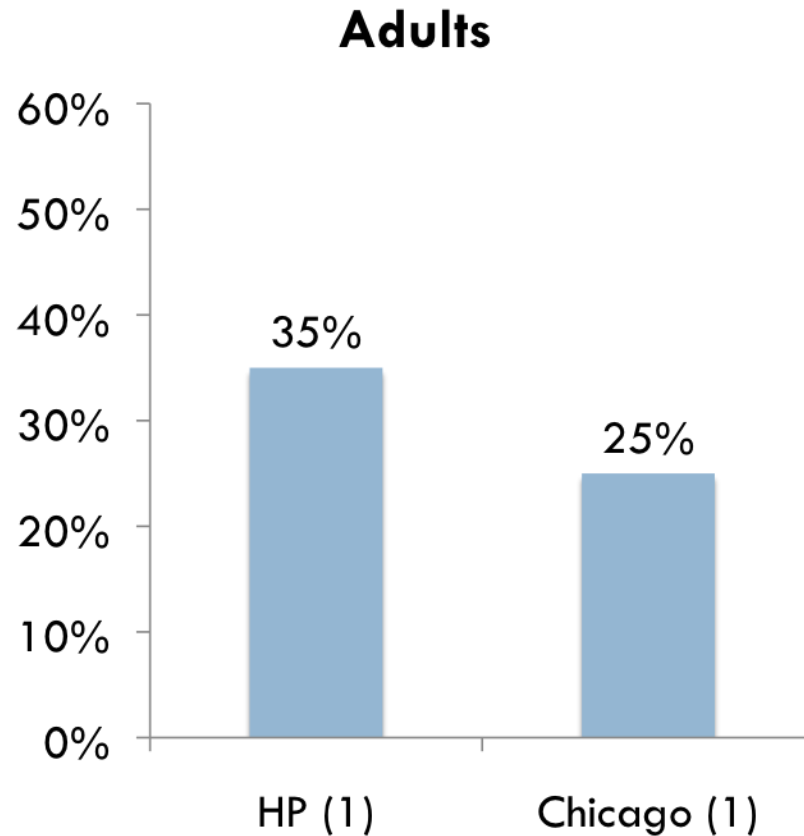


# Greater Humboldt Park Community

**Population by Ethnicity**

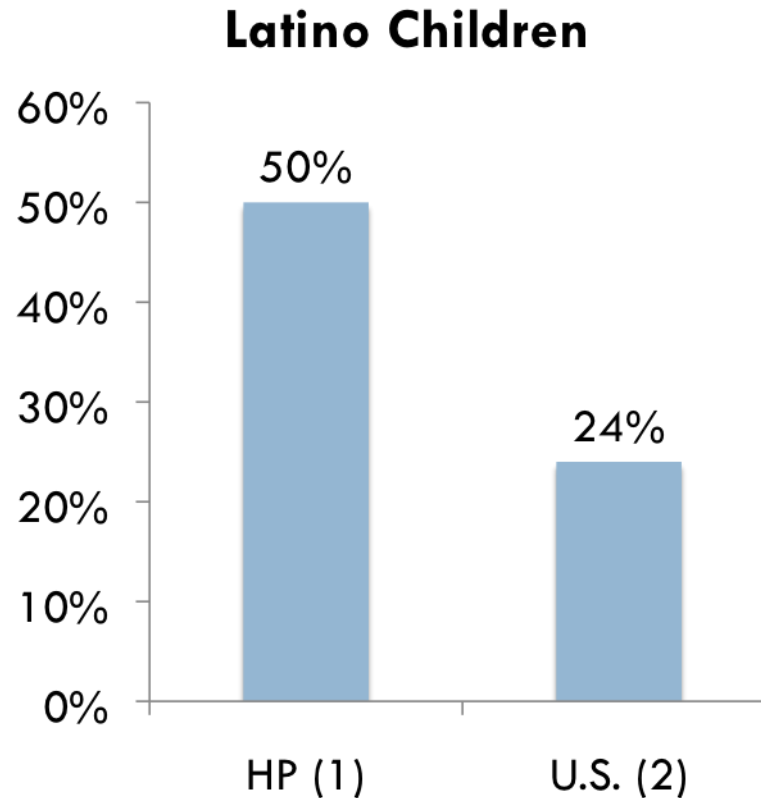


# Obesity in Humboldt Park



(1) Data collected from "The Community Survey in Humboldt Park: Preventing Obesity and Improving Our Health." 2006.

# Obesity in Humboldt Park

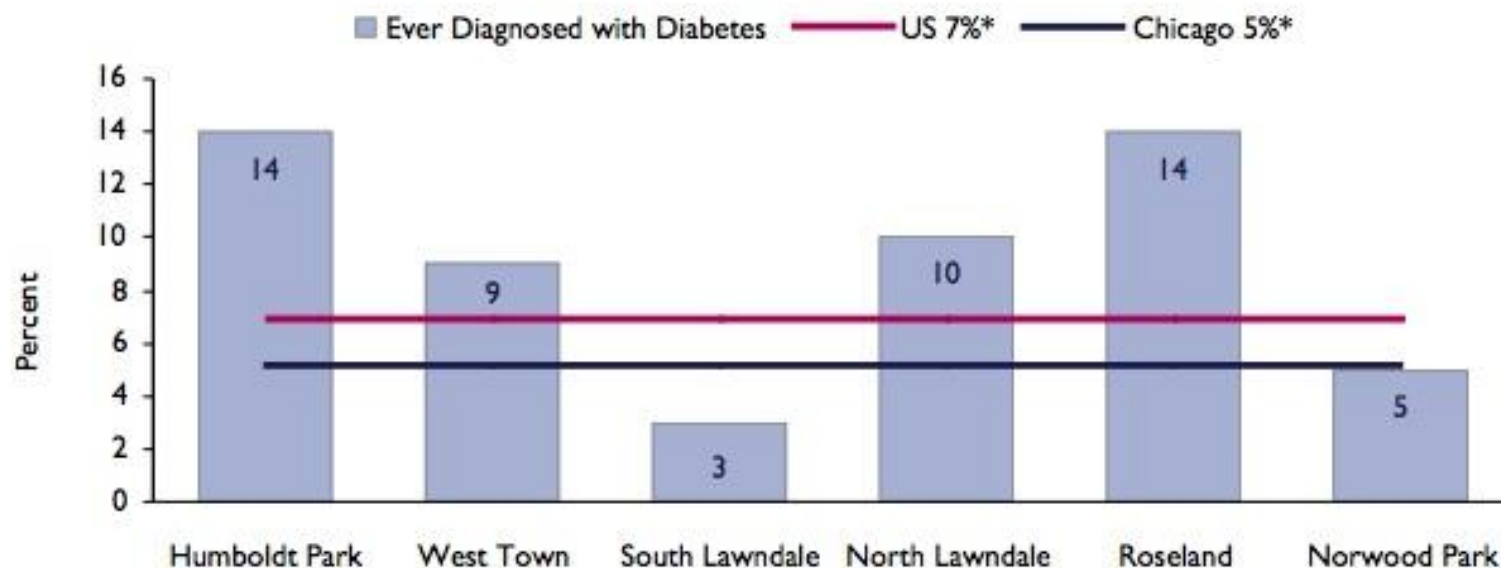


(1) Data collected from "The Community Survey in Humboldt Park: Preventing Obesity and Improving Our Health." 2006.

(2) Whitman S, Williams C, Shah AM. Sinai Health System's Improving Community Health Survey: Report I (Ten Key Findings). Chicago, Illinois: Sinai Health System, January 2004.

# Percent of Adults with Diabetes

Figure 2.1. Percent of Adults with Physician Diagnosed Diabetes



\* Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2002

Source: Improving Community Health Survey

Image from: Whitman S, Williams C, Shah AM. Sinai Health System's Improving Community Health Survey: Report I (Ten Key Findings). Chicago, Illinois: Sinai Health System, January 2004.



# The Quiet Revolution of Urban Agriculture

“There is a quiet revolution stirring in our food system. It is not happening so much on the distant farms that still provide us with the majority of our food; it is happening in cities, neighborhoods, and towns. It has evolved out of the basic need that every person has to know their food, and to have some sense of control over its safety and security. It is a revolution that is providing people with an important safety net where they can grow some nourishment and income for themselves and their families...”

# The Quiet Revolution of Urban Agriculture

“...And it is providing an oasis for the human spirit where urban people can gather, preserve something of their culture through native seeds and foods, and teach their children about food and the earth. The revolution is taking place in small gardens, under railroad tracks and power lines, on rooftops, at farmers’ markets, and in the most unlikely of places. It is a movement that has the potential to address a multitude of issues: economic, environmental, personal health, and cultural.”

Ableman, Michael. “Agriculture's Next Frontier: How Urban Farms Could Feed the World.” UTNE Reader, Nov/Dec 2000.

# Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative

The community seeks to inform, engage, and transform their local environment by:



Recognizing the high prevalence of diabetes, obesity, hypertension and coronary disease within the community, and then...



...addressing the need for nutritious, fresh herbs, fruits and vegetables to counter and prevent the health conditions and diseases.



The Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative

# Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative



The Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative  
seeks to develop community self-sufficiency  
in the production of key aspects  
of the community's *nutritional reserve*, where...

# Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative



...community residents, especially youth, actively engaged in the planning and development of the necessary systems of production, distribution and consumption of nutritious, culturally defined and community-specific produce with the purposeful intent of being self-reliant and food secure in eradicating the sequelae of unnaturally caused illnesses in our community.



# Urban Agriculture Initiative Goals

- Improve community's capacity to be self-sufficient in cultivating affordable, fresh herbs fruits and vegetables.
- Increase active participation of students and community residents in the multi-generational production of nutritious produce.
- Increase community's knowledge of, and access to, community-grown affordable, culturally consonant produce.
- Increase significantly the consumption of fresh produce by community residents.
- Increase the community's engagement in physical activity and active living.

Students admire their work on 2 of 30 community planters in Paseo Boricua



# Components of the Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative

## Greater Humboldt Park Urban Agriculture Initiative

*"Sí Se Puede"*  
(Yes We Can)

Community Education and  
Engagement

*"Cosecha Lo Tuyo"*  
(Grow Your Own)

Community Food Production and  
Distribution

*"Muévete"*  
(Get Moving)

Active Living

Health and  
Nutrition  
Campaign

Junior Master  
Gardeners

Green Collar  
Pipeline

Urban Oasis  
Edible Garden  
and Community  
Farm

Rooftop  
Green-houses

Back Yard and  
Community  
Gardens

El Conuco  
Produce Coop  
and  
Produce Kioskos

Muévete  
Fitness  
Options

Ciclo- Urbano  
Bicycling  
Program

Skate Board  
Program

# PACHS Rooftop Greenhouse



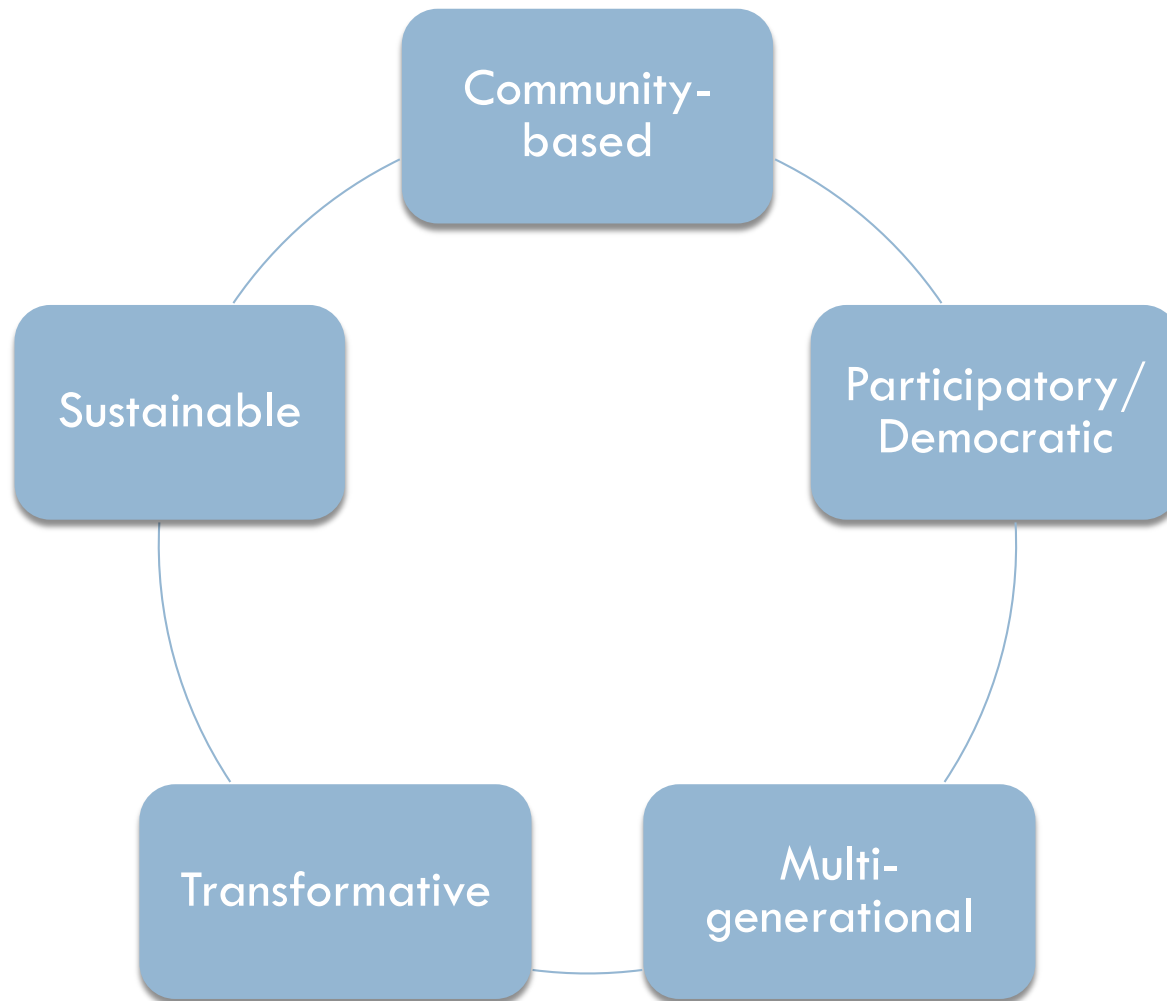


# Humboldt Park Urban Oasis





# Our Model of Urban Agriculture



# Urban Agriculture Systems

- ❑ The Initiative will rely on the technical assistance and support of UIUC ACES in developing, implementing and assessing the following systems and sub-systems:
  - ❑ Food Production (soil-based and hydroponic)
    - ❑ Development and maintenance of greenhouses and greenhouse environment (powered with renewable energy)
    - ❑ Parkland, community and backyard gardens
    - ❑ Fruits, vegetables and herbs
    - ❑ Sofrito project
  - ❑ Food Distribution
    - ❑ Community Produce Coop
    - ❑ Produce Delivery (using human power via tricycles)
  - ❑ Marketing
    - ❑ Market analysis
    - ❑ Packaging and advertising
  - ❑ Community Outreach, Health Education and Engagement
  - ❑ Program Evaluation

# Organizational Collaboration

- **The Puerto Rican Cultural Center**
  - ▣ CO-OP Humboldt Park
  - ▣ La Casita de Don Pedro
  - ▣ Pipeline to Health Professions
  - ▣ Consuelo Corretjer Day Care Center
  - ▣ La Voz del Paseo Boricua
- **Pedro Albizu Campos High School**
- **UIUC College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences**
- **UIUC Graduate School of Library and Information Science**
- **UIUC Office of Extension and Outreach**
- **The Chicago Botanic Garden**
- **The Institute of Puerto Rican Art and Culture**
- **The Chicago Park District**

# Our Future at Work and Play

